



Robert F. Bussabarger Papers (C3897)

Collection Number: C3897

Collection Title: Robert F. Bussabarger Papers

Dates: 1922-1990

Creator: Bussabarger, Robert F., 1922-2013

Abstract: The papers of ceramic sculptor, potter, painter and University of Missouri-Columbia Professor Emeritus of Art, include personal and professional correspondence, exhibition announcements and catalogs, photographs, publications, clippings, research project records, scrapbooks, biographical materials, records of the University of Missouri Department of Art, and miscellaneous material.

Collection Size: 7.0 cubic feet
(243 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia. If you would like more information, please contact us at columbia@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The donor has given and assigned to the University all rights of copyright, which the donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Robert F. Bussabarger Papers* (C3897); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Robert F. Bussabarger on July 22, 1991 (Accession No. CA5061). Additions to the papers were made by Bussabarger on August 1, 1991 (Accession No. CA5070) and on September 17, 1991 (Accession No. CA5085).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Robert F. Bussabarger Papers can be found in the following collection:

[*Robert F. Bussabarger Papers*](#), (CA5992)

Processed by: Processed by Paula L. McNeill on July 6, 1994. Finding aid revised by Elizabeth Engel on March 23, 2022.

Biographical Note:

Robert Franklin Bussabarger was born on September 17, 1922, in Corydon, Indiana, the only child of Alice Franklin and Russell Bussabarger, and spent his formative years in the American Midwest. After graduation from Covington (Ohio) High School in 1940, Bussabarger studied with painter Ralston Thompson at Wittenberg College in Springfield, Ohio. Four years later, in 1944, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in art.

During World War II Bussabarger served in the U.S. Navy and was stationed in the Pacific region. After the war he continued his education and attended Michigan State University, studying art with John de Martelli, Louis Raynor and Carl Schmidt. In 1947 he graduated with a Master of Arts degree in art practice and theory. After teaching art in the public schools of Benton Harbor, Michigan, for two years, he studied painting, ceramics and design with Paul Bogatay and Edgar Littlefield at Ohio State University from 1949 to 1951. During this period in Bussabarger's academic career, creative design and ceramics, strongly influenced by Asian art, became important elements in the development of his art.

Bussabarger was both a teacher and an exhibiting artist. In 1951 he began his university teaching career as an assistant professor of art at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. He remained in Texas until 1953 when he joined the art faculty of the University of Missouri in Columbia. For nearly four decades he taught ceramics and painting at the University of Missouri until his retirement in 1990. During his tenure at Missouri, he was chairman of the art department from 1970 to 1973 and spent a total of two years leave on research fellowships to India which resulted in a number of art works and publications.

During his long career Bussabarger was the recipient of many awards for both his artistic work and for his research. From 1961 to 1962 he received a Fulbright Research Scholarship to India. He travelled throughout the country photographing terracotta sculpture and temple architecture and, in 1962, held an exhibition of his own work in Calcutta. In 1964 he spent an additional three months in England studying Indian ceramic art. With a longstanding interest in folk art and culture, he conducted a comparative terracotta techniques study in Mexico in 1967. In 1968 he published *The Everyday Arts of India*, co-authored with Betty Dashew Robins. From 1968 to 1969 he again received a Fulbright-Hays Faculty Center Fellowship to study ceramic folk art in India, and worked on a project entitled "Indian Clay Imagery of the Past Four Centuries." At this time he also exhibited his own ceramics, drawings, and paintings in both Calcutta and Bombay. In 1978 Bussabarger took a sabbatical leave to India and culminated his year's work with an exhibition at the Gallery Chemould in Bombay. He returned to India in 1980 on a research fellowship from the University of Missouri and held an exhibition of his work at the Urja Art Gallery in Baroda. He was one of three ceramicists invited by the Crafts Council of Western India to participate in a ten-day workshop in Bombay with local potters in 1981. In 1982, after several one-man and group shows throughout central Missouri and the Midwest, the Columbia Art League held a major exhibition of Bussabarger's complete range of works: drawings, paintings, pastels, stoneware items and ceramic sculptures. In 1984 he again travelled to India and worked in different art centers throughout the country and exhibited at the Urja Art Gallery in Baroda and at the Gallery Chemould in Bombay.

Bussabarger's artwork has been exhibited and collected in various areas of the United States and in India. He has work in many private collections throughout the United States as well as the Air India Collection in Bombay, the Springfield (Missouri) Art Museum, and the State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia. His exhibition record is extensive. His one-man shows include: the Indo-American Society in Calcutta, 1962; the Corner Gallery in Louisville, Kentucky; Sculptors Gallery in St. Louis, 1966; the Academy of Fine Arts in Calcutta; American Cultural Center in Bombay, 1969; the University of Missouri Fine Arts Gallery Sabbatical Show, 1978; and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Show, 1989.

In addition to the exhibition of his own work, Bussabarger was responsible for organizing several other exhibitions: the University of Missouri Fine Arts Gallery, 1955-1959 and 1963-1967; and a travelling exhibit based on his and Betty Robins' private collection of Indian art shown at the University of Missouri-Columbia, Stephens College, Westminster College and Carleton College.

Bussabarger has received numerous awards and ribbons for his work. Among them were the San Antonio Watercolor Annual, 1952 and 1953; the Art Association Purchase Award, Decorative Arts Annual, Wichita, Kansas, 1956; the Merit Award in Sculpture, 30th Springfield Annual, Missouri, 1960; the Columbia Art League and Boone County Bank Show, 1959-present; and the Missouri State Fair at Sedalia. In 1987 he received a Faculty Alumni Award for his creative work and service to the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Bussabarger has held membership in several professional organizations: the Missouri Crafts Council, Columbia Art League, and Mid-America Art Conference. His publications include "Terracotta Temples of India," *Craft Horizons*, 1966; editor, "John Sloan Etchings," University of Missouri, 1967; co-author and illustrator, *The Everyday Art of India*, Dover, 1968; co-author, "The Makara," *Archaeology*, January 1970; co-author, "Folk Images of Sanjhi Devi," *Artibus Asiae*, July 1975; and others.

In retirement Robert Bussabarger and his wife resided in Columbia, Missouri where he taught art during the summers at the University of Missouri and created and exhibited his artwork in the area. He died in 2013.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following five series:

- Correspondence
- Exhibitions
- Photographs
- Clippings
- Miscellaneous

Scope and Content Note:

These papers reflect significant events in Bussabarger's personal and professional life with few gaps. Together the photographs and exhibition catalog series present a fairly complete visual record of Bussabarger's career as both an exhibiting artist and university professor of art.

The **Correspondence** series is arranged chronologically and contains both personal and

professional correspondence. Although there is little personal correspondence in the collection, what there is contains rich information written from the point of view of an individual trained in the visual arts. One letter, in particular, stands out. Bussabarger wrote to his wife Mary Louise from Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945, approximately one month after the atomic bomb was dropped on the city, and gave his impressions of the Japanese people, described Nagasaki, and included illustrations of the bomb site. The correspondence from the early 1950s is concerned with exhibitions and his work as an assistant professor of art at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. There are gaps in the correspondence from the late 1970s.

The **Exhibitions** series is arranged chronologically, dates from 1946 to 1989, and includes announcements, catalogs and price lists of works for Bussabarger's one-man and group shows. The annual exhibition for Michigan artists, Detroit Institute of Arts; the State of Illinois, first annual exhibition by artists of the Old Northwest Territory; and the 41st Annual Indiana Artists Exhibition are a few of the exhibitions included in this series. Local and regional exhibition announcements collected by Bussabarger are included in this series as well, including shows in the University of Missouri Fine Arts Gallery and the Columbia Art League.

The **Photographs** are arranged chronologically. Subject matter includes art works by Bussabarger, exhibition installations, university art students in class, and art and architecture of India. Photograph albums of Bussabarger's work were, for conservation purposes, removed from their original notebooks but were first photocopied to preserve a record of their original order and format. The photocopies are included in this series.

The **Clippings** are arranged chronologically and are primarily concerned with Bussabarger's professional life. Subject matter includes exhibitions, lectures, awards, feature articles, publication announcements, reviews, and news releases.

The **Miscellaneous** series contains research grant applications and reports, including two Fulbright-Hays fellowships to India. This series also contains the University of Missouri Department of Art records collected during Bussabarger's chairmanship in the early 1970s. Community activities documented in this series include the Maplewood Barn Theater, the City of Columbia Arts Council projects on Guitar Square, and the Ann Hawkins Gentry Building and design of its commemorative plaque. Bussabarger's membership in the Calvary Episcopal Church and participation in the university's Choral Union are reflected in this series. Galley proofs of a catalog of an exhibition of John Sloan's work curated by Bussabarger for the University's Fine Arts Gallery are in this series. Articles by and about Bussabarger are also in this series. Personal material includes Bussabarger's baby book with photographs, his high school yearbook replete with drawings and marginalia, scrapbooks, a Wittenberg College yearbook, his combination World War II journal/Wittenberg College scrapbook, certificates, awards, prize ribbons, and curriculum vitae. Membership in various professional and civic organizations and participation in conferences is also represented in this series.

Container List:

Correspondence Series

- f. 1 Correspondence, 1943-1949
- f. 2 Correspondence, 1950-1959
- f. 3 Correspondence, 1960-1963
- f. 4 Correspondence, 1964

f. 5-6	Correspondence, 1965
f. 7	Correspondence, 1966
f. 8	Correspondence, 1967
f. 9	Correspondence, 1968
f. 10-11	Correspondence, 1969
f. 12-14	Correspondence, 1970
f. 15-17	Correspondence, 1971
f. 18	Correspondence, 1972 January-March
f. 19	Correspondence, 1972 April-August
f. 20	Correspondence, 1972 September
f. 21	Correspondence, 1972 October-November
f. 22	Correspondence, 1972 December
f. 23-24	Correspondence, 1973
f. 25	Correspondence, 1974
f. 26	Correspondence, 1975
f. 27-29	Correspondence, 1976
f. 30-32	Correspondence, 1977 January-May
f. 33	Correspondence, 1978 March-September
f. 34	Correspondence, 1979 October-November
f. 35	Correspondence, 1980
f. 36	Correspondence, 1981 February-April
f. 37	Correspondence, 1982 May-December
f. 38	Correspondence, 1983 January-August
f. 39	Correspondence, 1984
f. 40	Correspondence, 1985-1988
f. 41	Correspondence, 1990 April-June
f. 42	Correspondence, undated

Exhibitions Series

f. 43	Exhibitions, 1946-1948
f. 44	Exhibitions, 1951-1952
f. 45	Exhibitions, 1953-1954
f. 46	Exhibitions, 1955-1959
f. 47-49	Exhibitions, 1960-1964
f. 50-54	Exhibitions, 1965-1969
f. 55-58	Exhibitions, 1970-1973
f. 59-63	Exhibitions, 1975-1979
f. 64-68	Exhibitions, 1980-1984
f. 69-73	Exhibitions, 1985-1989
f. 74-78	Exhibitions, undated

Photographs Series

f. 79	Photographs, 1942-1943
f. 80	Photographs, 1944-1949
f. 81	Photographs, c. 1950
f. 82	Photographs, 1952, Album 1 (photocopy of album included)
f. 83-86	Photographs, 1952, Album 2 (photocopy of album included in f. 83)
f. 87	Photographs, c. 1950-c. 1952

- f. 88 Photographs, c. 1950-c. 1954
- f. 89-90 Photographs, 1955, 1957, 1958, Album 3 (photocopy of album included in f. 89)
- f. 91-93 Photographs, 1955
- f. 94 Photographs, 1957, early 1960s, Album 4 (photocopy of album included)
- f. 95 Photographs, 1960, Album 5 (photocopy of album included)
- f. 96 Photographs, 1960s
- f. 97 Photographs, c. 1963
- f. 98 Photographs, 1960, 1964, Album 6 (photocopy of album included)
- f. 99 Photographs, c. 1966
- f. 100 Photographs, 1969, Album 7 (photocopy of album included)
- f. 101 Photographs, 1970s
- f. 102 Photographs, 1970
- f. 103 Photographs, 1972
- f. 104-105 Photographs, 1973
- f. 106-119 Photographs, 1978, Album 8 (photocopy of album included in f. 106)
- f. 120 Photographs, 1979
- f. 121 Photographs, 1987
- f. 122 Photographs, 1990, "Ceramics: Unaffected by Time and Place"
- f. 123-128 Photographs, 1990
- f. 129-138 Photographs, n.d.
- f. 139-144 Photographs, "Missouri Folk: Their Creative Images," 1982
- f. 145-148 Photographs, "IBM Collection Exhibition"
- f. 149 Photographs, "Pre-Columbian Art Exhibition"
- f. 150 Photographs, "John Sloan Exhibition," 1967
- f. 151-152 Photographs, "Faculty Artist Exhibition," 1989

Clippings Series

- f. 153 Clippings, 1930s-1940s
- f. 154 Clippings, 1950s
- f. 155-159 Clippings, 1960-1964
- f. 160-164 Clippings, 1965-1969
- f. 165-169 Clippings, 1970-1974
- f. 170-174 Clippings, 1975-1979
- f. 175-179 Clippings, 1980-1984
- f. 180-184 Clippings, 1985-1989
- f. 185 Clippings, undated

Miscellaneous Series

- f. 186 Biographical materials/vitae
- f. 187 Academic appointments, 1954-1964
- f. 188 Academic appointments, 1965-1979
- f. 189-191 Annual Addition to Cumulative Faculty Record
- f. 192 Miscellaneous Faculty Record
- f. 193-199 Research Grants and Fellowships
- f. 200 Fulbright, India, 1961
- f. 201 Fulbright, India, 1962
- f. 202-205 Partners of the Americas, Brazil, 1983
- f. 206 *The Everyday Art of India*, 1966-1969

- f. 207 *The Everyday Art of India*, 1968
- f. 208 *A Selection of Etchings by John Sloan*, 1967, galley proofs
- f. 209 "Folk Images of Sanjhi Devi," 1975
- f. 210 "The Makara: A Mythical Monster from India," 1970
- f. 211 "Sound Off with Clay Whistles: Musical Instrument of Early Man," 1956
- f. 212 "'Art' Pottery in India," 1962
- f. 213 Miscellaneous
- f. 214 Midwest Regional Conference of the Danforth Associate Program, 1973
- f. 215 College Art Association, 1973
- f. 216 Who's Who in American Art, 1975
- f. 217-218 Maplewood Barn Theater
- f. 219 Navy journal, 1945-1946, Wittenberg College scrapbook, 1944
- f. 220 Michigan State University diploma, 1947
- f. 221 Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio, magazine, 1941
- f. 222-223 Certificates
- f. 224 Presentations
- f. 225 Design Project, Ohio State University, 1951
- f. 226 Indic drawings
- f. 227 "Fine Films by Tiger Art Theater," flyer design
- f. 228 "The Terrible Poems," by Tom McAfee, illustrations
- f. 229 Crafts Council of Western India pottery workshop, 1980-81
- f. 230 *Artibus* newsletters
- f. 231 Columbia Art League
- f. 232 Calvary Episcopal Church bookmark design
- f. 233 University of Missouri Liberal Arts banner design
- f. 234-235 University of Missouri Department of Art Self-study, 1970
- f. 236-237 University of Missouri Department of Art Records, 1970-1972
- f. 238 University of Missouri Ceramics course syllabi, 1975-1991
- f. 239 Baby Book, 1922
- f. 240 *My Senior Memories*, 1940
- f. 241 *The Wittenberger*, Wittenberg College, 1943
- f. 242 Scrapbooks
- f. 243 Art Exhibition Ribbons

Index:

Index Terms	Folders	Image
Ann Hawkins Gentry Building, Columbia, Missouri	30	
Architectural models--St. Thomas, Missouri	141,143	y
Architecture, Domestic--Arcadia Valley, Missouri	143	y
Arnold, John D.--Painting	140	y
Art Students League of New York, New York City	1	
Art--Exhibitions	43-78,243	
Art--Exhibitions	43-78,82,83,95,101-103,105-107,109,114,116-119,124,131,132,139-152,243	y

Index Terms	Folders	Image
Arts and crafts--Missouri	115,139-144	y
Arts, Indic	101,113-114,130,136	y
Art--Study and teaching	83,91,94,102,105,106,109-112,119,122,123,130-132	
Atomic bomb, Nagasaki, Japan, 1945	1	
Atomic bomb, Nagasaki, Japan, 1945	1	y
Baskets	140,142,144	y
Beasley, Harold	144	y
Beasley, Harold--Musical instruments	144	y
Boone County Bank Art Show, Columbia, Missouri	243	
Brazil	202-205	
Bunch, Alva	144	y
Bunch, Alva--Chairs	144	y
Bunch, Bernice--Quilts	139	y
Burrus, Jack--Sculpture/Wood carving	139	y
Bussabarger, Mary Louise Sterling	24,79,83,92,101-102,130,132,138	y
Bussabarger, Robert F. (1922-2013)	1-138,153-243	
Bussabarger, Robert F. (1922-2013)	24,79,80,81,93,90-98,100-106,109-112,116,119,120,122,129-132,134-138,145	y
Butler, E. Rex--Painting	139	y
Ceramic sculpture	79-81, 83, 89-91, 93-108, 110-112, 116-120, 122-125, 127-128, 129-137	y
Ceramics	80,82-85,87-91,93-108,110-112,116-120,122-124,129-133,135-138	y
Chairs	144	y
Church architecture	139	y
Colborn, R. S.--Wood carving	139	y
Columbia Art League Art Show, Columbia, Missouri	243	
Columbia Art League, Columbia, Missouri	102,116	y
Cook, Daisy (1902-1977)--Painter	139	y
Curry, Betty--Baskets	144	y
Curry, Roger--Baskets	144	y
Dolls	142	y
Drawing	79-87, 93-94, 102, 104, 134, 136	y
Dulcimers	142	y
Folk art--Missouri	139-144	y
Griffin, Melvin Harrison--Miniatures	139	y
Guitar Square, Columbia, Missouri	30-32	y
Harps	142	y

Index Terms	Folders	Image
Hendricks, Larry Harold--Sculpture/Woodcarving	141	y
Holstein, Tom--Sculpture/Wood carving	142	y
Holy Cross Church, Cuba, Missouri	139	y
India	200-201, 206-207, 209, 211, 226	
Japan, 1945	1	
Japan--History--1945-1952, Allied occupation	1	y
Kerridge, David and Frances, Art Collection	125	y
Kilns	91, 110, 119, 131	y
Kirby, Norm--Sculpture	141	y
Lloyd, Donald--Painting	140	y
Lowry, Mike--Musical instruments	142	y
Maas, Gerald A.--Sculpture	144	y
Mann, Ronald	93	y
Maplewood Barn Theater, Columbia, Missouri	217-218	
McAfee, James Thomas (1928-1982)	228	
McKinin, Lawrence	92	y
Meyer House, Iberia, Missouri	143	y
Michigan State College, Department of Art	80	y
Miniatures	139	y
Missouri, Columbia. Commission on the Arts	30-32	
Missouri. Fair, Art Show, Sedalia, Missouri	243	
Moger, Pauline, Quilts	142	y
Montminy, Pierre	92	y
Montminy, Tracy (-1993)	92	y
Moonie, Trula Marie, Baskets	140	y
Mounter, Don, Wood carving	141	y
Musical instruments	142, 144	y
Negas, Mark, Sculpture	141	y
Oerly, Fred--Wood carving	140	y
Painting	79-85, 87-88, 93-94, 104-105, 126, 128, 132-133, 135-136, 138-141, 145	
Pottery	80 ,82-88, 91-, 94-97, 100, 104-105, 107, 110-112, 116, 118, 129, 131-133	y
Pozycinski, J., Wood carving	139	
Quilts	139, 142	y
Roberson, Ella Smith, Dolls	142	y
Robins, Betty Dashaw	101-102, 120, 131	y
Schmidt, Frank, Architectural models	141, 143	y
Sculpture	139-142, 144	y

Index Terms	Folders	Image
Sharp, Iva, Painting	141	y
Ships	80	y
Skelton, Charles R.	144	y
Skelton, Charles R., Baskets	144	y
Smith, Robert E. (Painting)	139	y
Stephen F. Austin State College, Nacodoches, Texas, Department of Art	85-86, 105	y
Thomas, Homer L.	92	y
Thompson, Ralson	79	y
Toomay, Mike (1906-1979), Sculptures	140	y
U.S. Naval Reserve Midshipmen's School, Abbott Hall, Chicago, Illinois, 13th Company, 1944	80	y
U.S. Navy	1,219	
University of Missouri, Department of Art	234-238	
University of Missouri-Columbia, Department of Art	91, 109-111, 116, 118-119, 123	y
Whistles	93, 130	y
Wight, James (Mrs.) (1849-1927), Quilts	142	y
Wood carving	111, 112, 119, 122, 139-142	y
Wood, Beatrice	101	y
World War, 1939-1945--Correspondence	1	
World War, 1939-1945--Ships	80	y